

**2015 - 2016**

## **Foundations of Algebra**

***(Year 1 Implementation)***

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

The State Board of Education (SBOE) on March 12, 2015, approved requirements for a four-step eligibility process for student placement in the Foundations of Algebra course. The four-step Diagnostic Data and Eligibility Requirements' process was provided as an attachment with the March 13, 2015, Superintendents' Memo from Dr. Martha Reichrath. Districts must adhere to the eligibility requirements to receive state funding for the Foundations of Algebra course.

**Note: Foundations of Algebra assessments, resources, and professional learning can be used to augment instruction for accommodating specific student needs in both high school math support courses and middle school connections courses.**

## Foundations of Algebra Year 1 Implementation

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of the Foundations of Algebra course?

The Foundations of Algebra course is a first year high school mathematics course option for students who have completed mathematics in grades 6, 7, and 8 yet will need substantial support to bolster success in high school mathematics. The course is aimed at students who have reported low standardized test performance in prior grades and/or have demonstrated significant difficulties in previous mathematics classes. The Foundations of Algebra course is not a prerequisite for any math course.

2. What content will be covered in the Foundations of Algebra course?

Foundations of Algebra will provide opportunities to revisit and expand the understanding of foundational algebra concepts, will employ diagnostic means to offer focused interventions, and will incorporate varied instructional strategies to prepare students for required high school mathematics courses. The course will emphasize both algebra and numeracy in a variety of contexts including number sense, proportional reasoning, quantitative reasoning with functions, and solving equations and inequalities.

3. What are the eligibility requirements for the Foundations of Algebra course?

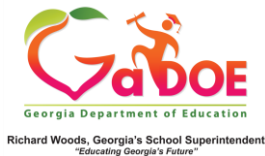
As a state-funded and approved course, districts must follow the steps below to determine student eligibility:

**Step I:** Middle school administrators/teachers will identify students who **Did Not Meet** expectations on at least two of the following three assessments: 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT). These are students who may have significant gaps in their mathematics achievement.

**Step II:** Middle schools will administer the Individual Knowledge Assessment of Number (IKAN) diagnostic to students identified in Step I. Only students who score at IKAN Stage 5 (equivalent to 4<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics) or below will be eligible for the Foundations of Algebra course. (No costs will be incurred by the state or districts.)

**Step III:** During the scheduling process, high schools will enroll students identified as eligible in Step II in Foundations of Algebra.

**Step IV:** By the October 2015 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) count date, districts implementing the Foundations of Algebra course will report the Georgia Testing Identifier (GTID), student name, the IKAN score of every student assessed in Step III, and an indicator of whether the student was enrolled in the course to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).



4. Are the placement decisions for the Foundations of Algebra course recommendations or requirements?

The placement decisions are requirements for determining student eligibility for Foundations of Algebra.

5. Is there flexibility in the CRCT or Individual Knowledge Assessment of Number (IKAN) eligibility criteria?

Only students meeting the eligibility requirements outlined in this document are eligible for the course. However, schools may elect to schedule eligible students directly into Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra at the discretion of parents and teachers. The GaDOE will monitor and evaluate performance data during implementation to determine whether any criteria adjustments are needed.

6. Will students who **Meet Expectations** on a CRCT retake be eligible for enrollment in the course?

Students who **Meet Expectations** on the CRCT retake can still be considered for enrollment in the course. Eligibility is determined based on the first administration of the CRCT in each grade level. However, meeting expectations on the retake should be a consideration in the decision about whether or not to place the student in the course.

7. Do the requirements differ for students who take the CRCT-M?

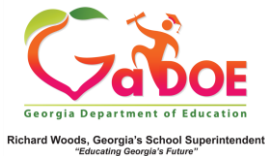
A scale score of 330 or below, Level 1 or 2, on the CRCT-M indicates **Did Not Meet** expectations on the CRCT, making the student eligible to proceed to Step II of the Eligibility Requirements. Students who take the CRCT-M should score at IKAN Stage 5 or below to be eligible for the Foundations of Algebra course.

8. Will a student who fails the Foundations of Algebra course need to repeat the course, or will he/she move on to Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra?

This decision should be made on an individual student basis in consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s) due to the long-term implications on high school math course and postsecondary opportunities.

9. How will the Georgia Milestones affect the Foundations of Algebra course eligibility requirements?

The Georgia Milestones results will not be available when course eligibility decisions are determined for the 2015-2016 school year. The GaDOE will adjust the requirements for subsequent years.



10. Will districts on block scheduling use the same eligibility requirements for students in the spring 2016 semester?

Districts on block scheduling will use the same eligibility requirements.

11. Will students who fail Coordinate Algebra in the 2014-2015 school year be eligible for enrollment?

Students who earn a failing grade in Coordinate Algebra and score Stage 5 or lower on the IKAN diagnostic are eligible for the course. Due to the long-term limitations that this decision could have on high school math course and postsecondary opportunities, the district and school should maintain careful documentation of the communication and decision-making process. Since the Foundations of Algebra course is not a prerequisite for Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra, students can be enrolled concurrently in the Foundations of Algebra course and Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra.

12. What criteria will be in place for students transferring from out-of-state or private schools who do not have prior CRCT scores?

For out-of-state students who transfer into the state, the student must have earned the lowest performance level in two of the three previous years on state assessments. Regardless of available student standardized test history, the district must administer the IKAN diagnostic, and the student must earn Stage 5 or lower to be eligible.

13. Will districts be required to use the IKAN diagnostic, or can the district choose to use an alternate diagnostic in place of IKAN for placement?

Districts are required to use the IKAN to determine eligibility for the Foundations of Algebra course.

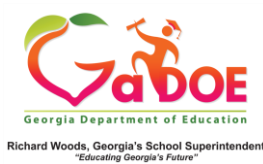
14. Will Charter and/or IE2 districts be able to receive a waiver from course eligibility requirements?

Charter Systems have broad flexibility so they do not have to specify the state-funded courses listed in State Board Rule 160-4-2-.20 in their Charter to be able to receive a waiver from course eligibility requirements.

IE2 Systems have enumerated flexibility, so they would have to specify flexibility from the state-funded courses listed in State Board Rule 160-4-2-.20 in their IE2 Contract to be able to receive a waiver from course eligibility requirements.

15. Will schools be able to receive Remedial Education Program (REP) funding for students enrolled in this course?

Students who meet at least two of the seven requirements in the SBOE Remedial Education Program (REP) Rule qualify for REP which can support funding for the Foundations of Algebra course.



16. Is the Foundations of Algebra course required for identified students?

Districts have the flexibility to move eligible students directly into Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra. The district should consult with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and teachers to determine which course is in the student's best interest.

17. Can parent(s)/guardian(s) refuse the inclusion of their child in the Foundations of Algebra course?

Parent(s)/guardian(s) can refuse inclusion after a conference with school personnel. In addition, the school or district may request a parent letter of refusal to be included in the student's permanent record.

18. How will the GaDOE measure the effectiveness of the Foundations of Algebra course?

Since the goal of the course is to set students up for success in subsequent math coursework, the GaDOE will compare the Algebra I and Coordinate Algebra performance of students who enrolled in the Foundations of Algebra course with students who just missed being eligible for the course and enrolled directly into Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra. This analysis will allow the GaDOE to determine whether the course is accomplishing its intended goal and whether the eligibility requirements need adjustment.